

**MEMBERS' ADVISORY GROUP FOR PUBLIC CONVENIENCES
(Report of the Advisory Group)****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group was re-constituted by the Cabinet at its meeting on 15th September, 2005 to consider the present position in relation to the Council's public conveniences and proposals for their improvement and continuing maintenance (Minute No. 74).
- 1.2 A meeting of the Advisory Group took place on 24th November 2005 and Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler, N J Guyatt and Mrs P J Longford were present. Councillor Mrs K P Gregory also had been invited to attend to contribute her views on the condition of facilities in St. Neots.
- 1.3 Councillor I C Bates was elected Chairman of the Advisory Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year and declared a personal interest by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council and the County's potential involvement in a solution to the relocation of the public conveniences at South Street, St. Neots.
- 1.4 To assist their deliberations, Members referred to a report by the Head of Environment and Transport which had drawn together recent decisions and which contained additional information in respect of issues previously discussed by the Group. (Enclosed with the Cabinet Agenda at Item No 7(b))

2. BACKGROUND AND UPDATE

- 2.1 In accordance with the instructions of the Group, it was reported that discussions with St. Neots Town Council had not achieved agreement to public use of facilities in the Priory Centre in the event of the disposal of South Street and that with the exception of St. Neots Town Council, no other town had expressed an interest in assuming responsibility for maintenance of public conveniences in their towns.
- 2.2 As requested at their previous meeting, information was presented to the Group on the financial implications were the Council to bring public conveniences up to an agreed standard and quality within existing configurations and, where necessary, with structural alterations to overcome particular issues at some locations.

3. STANDARD OF FITTINGS

Further to discussions at their previous meeting (Item No. 5 of the report of the meeting held on 2nd February 2005 refers), the Advisory Group endorsed the basic and enhanced level of provision for public conveniences in the District as described in paragraph 3 of the report of the Head of Environment and Transport.

4. SITE EVALUATION

- 4.1 The Advisory Group proceeded to assess the requirements of each of the nine facilities in the District.
- 4.2 In terms of the public conveniences in New Road, Ramsey and in view of the proposals for development of the Grand Cinema site which could incorporate new externally accessed facilities (still under the control of the District Council) Members were of the view that the existing facilities should be refurbished to the basic standard but only if the development of the Grand Cinema site does not proceed. For this reason, the Group suggested that work to New Road, Ramsey should be scheduled later in the programme of improvements. In the meantime, the Project and Assets Manager undertook to ensure that some minor re-painting work was undertaken.
- 4.3 Given the potential for redevelopment of Huntingdon and St. Ives Bus Station, the Advisory Group concluded that facilities at both locations should be refurbished to basic standard.
- 4.4 In view of the location of facilities at St. Neots and Huntingdon Riverside Parks, Godmanchester and West Street, St. Ives, the Advisory Group concluded that these facilities should be refurbished to an enhanced standard.
- 4.5 As the facilities at South Street, St. Neots were in poor condition, out of character with their surroundings and required significant investment to upgrade to an acceptable standard, the Advisory Group were of the view that they should be replaced but relocated elsewhere in the town. Following further discussions with the town/county councils. It was the view of the Group that the public conveniences at South Street should not be removed until replacement facilities were made available.
- 4.6 Mindful of their previous deliberations in this respect, the Advisory Group

RECOMMENDED

that the Head of Environment and Transport be authorised to commence the programme of improvements to bring public conveniences in the District up to a basic or enhanced standard as determined in paragraphs 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 ante.

5. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF IMPROVEMENTS

- 5.1 Members considered a proposed three year programme for improvement works compiled to avoid more than one facility in any town being out of use at any one time. It was reported that works could commence with the public conveniences at Tebbuts Road, St. Neots given recent fire damage at that location. It was anticipated that the cost of improvements would be part met by insurance cover.
- 5.2 It was confirmed that basic improvements could involve internal re-structuring, new fixtures and fittings as well as re-decoration.
- 5.3 In terms of the programme, it was proposed that this should be progressed in three phases and appropriate funds released at the commencement of each phase. For clarification, the Advisory Group requested that the estimated cost of improvements proposed to be undertaken in 2007/08 should be identified separately for each location and that funding for alternative arrangements at South Street, St. Neots

equivalent to improvements of a basic standard at a cost of £38,000 be allocated.

5.4 Accordingly, the Advisory Group

RECOMMENDED

that Phase 1 of the programme of improvements to public conveniences in 2006/07 comprising work to Tebbuts Road and the Riverside, St. Neots, West Street, St. Ives and Godmanchester be progressed at a cost not exceeding £447,000.

6. FUTURE MAINTENANCE

Given the response by the town councils to the suggestion that they assume responsibility for maintenance of public conveniences in their towns and the preference expressed by Members for a uniform standard of cleaning and quality of facilities across the District, the Advisory Group

RECOMMENDED

that the Head of Environmental and Transport be authorised to make the necessary arrangements to secure a single contract for the cleaning and maintenance of all public conveniences district wide for a minimum period of three years.

7. AUTOMATIC PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

In view of the low level of use of the automatic public conveniences in Huntingdon and St. Neots vis-à-vis the cost of their provision, the Advisory Group

RECOMMENDED

that the Head of Environment and Transport be authorised to serve appropriate notice on JC Decaux to terminate the leases for the remaining four APCs in Huntingdon and St Neots and the Head of Financial Services advised of the opportunity this decision might present to identify Gershon efficiency savings

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The Cabinet is requested to endorse the recommendations of the Advisory Group contained in paragraphs 4.6, 5.4, 6 and 7.

Councillor I C Bates
Chairman of the Advisory Group